

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRASIL 08414 01 OF 02 301758Z

53

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8075

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 8414

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, BR

SUBJ: REACTIONS TO RIO KIDNAPPING AND BOMBINGS

REF: RIO DE JANEIRO 3591, BRASILIA 7778

THE FOLLOWING REPORT WAS PROVIDED BY AMCONSUL RIO
DE JANEIRO EMBASSY CONCURS.

1. SUMMARY: GOB JUSTICE MINISTER AND RIO 1ST ARMY COMMANDER
STRONGLY CONDEMNED SEPTEMBER 22 KIDNAPPING OF NOVA IGUACU
BISHOP, DESTRUCTION OF HIS AUTOMOBILE, AND BOMBING OF RESIDENCE
OF RIO MEDIA TYCOON ROBERTO MARINHO, ALL CREDITED TO BRASILIAN
ANTICOMMUNIST ALLIANCE (AAB). POPE PAUL, AS WELL AS PROMINENT
BRAZILIANS, HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR REVULSION WHILE NATIONAL CONFER-
ENCE OF BRAZILIAN BISHOPS (CNBB) SECRETARY GENERAL AND BRAZIL
BAR ASSOCIATION (OAB) FINGERED RIGHT WING EXTREMISTS AS RESPON-
SIBLE FOR INCIDENTS. RESULTS OF POLICE INVESTIGATIONS TO DATE,
AS ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY, HAVE BEEN MEAGER. CONTINUATION OF BOMBING
INCIDENTS INTO SECOND MONTH, DURING PERIOD OF ELECTIONEERING FOR
NOVEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, PROBABLY EMBARRASSES AND IRRITATES
GEISEL GOVERNMENT. WHILE THERE ARE NOW GREATER PRESSURES ON GOB
SECURITY MECHANISMS TO APPREHEND THOSE WHO PERPETRATED LATEST AND
PREVIOUS INCIDENTS, FACT REMAINS THAT ARRESTS OF RIGHT-WING
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PAGE 02 BRASIL 08414 01 OF 02 301758Z

EXTREMISTS ASSOCIATED WITH OR PART OF GOB SECURITY AND INTELLI-

GENCE SERVICES WOULD CAUSE NOT ONLY EMBARRASSMENT TO REGIME, BUT WOULD ENTAIL POLITICAL RISKS WITHIN PRESENT SYSTEM PROBABLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THIS REGIME. AT MOST, WE WOULD ESTIMATE THAT GOVERNMENT WILL SEVERELY ADMONISH KNOWN MEMBERS OF AAB. END SUMMARY.

2. OFFICIAL REACTION TO SEPT 22-23 KIDNAPPING OF BISHOP HIPOLITO AND BOMBING INCIDENTS IN RIO DE JANEIRO (RIO REFTEL) WAS SWIFT AND STRONGLY WORDED. JUSTICE MINISTER FALCAO READ STATEMENT IN BRASILIA SEPT 23 FOLLOWING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT GEISEL, ALTHOUGH FALCAO DENIED THAT THE INCIDENTS WERE DISCUSSED WITH THE PRESIDENT. FALCAO STATED "THE GOVERNMENT REPUDIATES WITH VEHEMENCE THE CRIMES WHICH HAVE OCCURRED WHICH ARE ENTIRELY CONTRARY TO THE UPBRINGING AND TO THE CHARACTER OF THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE. WE CONDEMN THEM, FROM WHEREVER THEY EMANATE. WE ARE FOLLOWING THE ENQUIRIES AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL FOR THE DISCOVERY OF THE AUTHORS AND THE LEGAL PUNISHMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE." RIO'S 1ST ARMY COMMANDER, GENERAL REYNALDO ISSUED BRIEF STATEMENT SEPT 23 WHICH READ IN PART "THE ARMY LIKE THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE HAS A FIRM DEMOCRATIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND CONSEQUENTLY CONDEMNS AND COMBATS WHATEVER EXTREMIST ACTIVITY. PERIODIC CRIMINAL ACTS DO NOT AFFECT THE TRANQUILITY AND PEACE EXISTING IN THE AREA". THESE PROMPT PUBLIC CONDEMNATIONS FROM FALCAO AND REYNALDO CONTRAST WITH THEIR INITIAL SILENCE AT THE TIME OF AUGUST BOMB EXPLOSION AT BRAZILIAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND BOMB ATTEMPT AT RIO HEADQUARTERS OF OAB. OFFICIAL REACTION WAS MUTED SOMEWHAT BY DECISION BY FEDERAL POLICE LATER IN DAY WHICH FORBADE ANY RADIO OR TV REPORTAGE ON INCIDENTS, EXTENDING TO COVERAGE OF FALCAO'S STATEMENT. CONDEMNATIONS ALSO CAME FROM RIO GOVERNOR, EXTREMIST RIGHT-WING GROUP TRADITION, FAMILY AND PROPERTY, SEVERAL POLITICAL PERSONALITIES AS WELL AS SAO PAULO II ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL DILERMANDO ("WE DO NOT ACCEPT TERRORISM OF WHATEVER NATURE"). BRAZIL BAR ASSOCIATION IN NOTE ISSUED ON INCIDENTS MADE PERHAPS MOST DIRECT LINKAGE OF EVENTS TO CURRENT INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION BY STATING THAT BOMBINGS WERE AIMED AT MAKING GEISEL'S ANNOUNCED OBJECTIVE OF DISTENSAO MORE DIFFICULT.

3. AT RIO PRESS CONFERENCE, SECRETARY GENERAL OF CNBB, DOM IVO LORSCHETTER, MINCED NO WORDS CONCERNING WHOM HE BELIEVED RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT TERRORIST ACTS. "THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE

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PAGE 03 BRASIL 08414 01 OF 02 301758Z

EXTREME RIGHT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMB INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN OCCURRING". DOM IVO WAS QUOTED BY THE PRESS AS STATING THAT THE CHURCH WILL NOT BE DETERRED FROM ITS STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DESPITE SUCH INTIMIDATION AND THAT TO THE CONTRARY THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE INDICATE THAT THE CHURCH IS BEING EFFECTIVE. PRESS REPORTED THAT POPE PAUL AS WELL AS THE LATIN AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE HAD SENT MESSAGES OF SOLIDARITY TO BISHOP HIPOLITO.

4. WHILE THE PLIGHT OF BISHOP RECEIVED MOST ATTENTION, GLOBO PRESS AND TV CHAIN OWNER ROBERTO MARINHO, ACCORDING TO ONE CONSULATE SOURCE, RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL FROM GEISEL AND PRESS REPORTED CALLS FROM SEVERAL MINISTERS, THE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROMINENT OFFICIAL AND NON-OFFICIAL PERSONALITIES.

5. PRESS COVERAGE IN RIO HAS BEEN INTENSE. POPULAR PRESS HAS HAD A FIELD DAY WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF BLOODY CLOTHING, INJURED HOUSEHOLD SERVANT OF MARINHO, AND MANY OF BISHOP AND LEADING CHURCH FIGURES. EDITORIAL REACTION HAS BEEN LIMITED TO JORNAL DO BRASIL WHICH CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT DECISION TO BAN TV AND RADIO REPORTING AS TYPE OF ACTION WHICH RUNS COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO STATED AIMS OF GEISEL GOVERNMENT BY INDUCING POLITICAL APATHY AMONG YOUNG AND CREATING UNCERTAINTIES AMONG PEOPLE AS WHOLE. JORNAL'S COMMENT APPEARED IN WAKE OF MANY RUMORS ABOUT BOMB THREATS WHICH LED TO EVACUATION OF SEVERAL DOWNTOWN RIO OFFICES SEPTEMBER 24.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 BRASIL 08414 02 OF 02 301749Z

53

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AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 8414

6. POLICE HAVE TO DATE REVEALED LITTLE INFORMATION PUBLICLY ON RESULTS OF THEIR INVESTIGATIONS. THEY HAVE APPARENTLY ESTABLISHED THAT AAB NOTE LEFT NEAR BISHOP'S CAR WAS TYPED ON SAME TYPEWRITER AS PAMPHLETS LEFT AT SCENE OF AUGUST RIO BOMBINGS. 1ST ARMY SEIZED TWO VIDEO TAPES MADE FOR GLOBO TV BY BISHOP SHORTLY BEFORE KIDNAPPING ALTHOUGH BISHOP REPORTEDLY DISCUSSED ONLY MATTERS

OF CHURCH AND HIS BISHOPRIC DURING INTERVIEW. INTERESTINGLY, THIS INTERVIEW IS ONLY EVIDENT LINK BETWEEN BISHOP AND GLOBO. BEYOND THESE DEVELOPMENTS, ONE POLICE OFFICIAL WAS QUOTED BY JORNAL DO BRASIL AS STATING THAT HE SAW THE INCIDENTS AS PART OF COMMUNIST CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AT TURNING PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST GOVERNMENT. FOLLOWING THIS PERHAPS SINCERE BUT LESS THAN ASTUTE REMARK, POLICE HAVE CONFINED THEIR PUBLIC COMMENTS TO WHAT FEW FACTS THEY HAVE UNCOVERED.

7. NUMBER OF SUPPOSITIONS ARE CURRENT HERE CONCERNING TARGETING OF BISHOP HIPOLITO AND MARINHO. HIPOLITO IS LONG-STANDING VOCAL CRITIC OF "DEATH SQUAD" WHICH HAS FOCUSED ITS ACTIVITIES IN NOVA IGUACU AREA AS WELL AS BEING CRITIC OF GOVERNMENTAL NEGLECT IN SOCIAL FIELD IN WORKING CLASS SUBURBS OF GREATER RIO. THERE HAS BEEN SOME SPECULATION HERE THAT AAB (WHICH SFR RIO DE JANEIRO BELIEVES INCLUDES HARDLINE MILITARY OFFICERS WITH PROBABLE PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUAL ARMY OFFICERS IN INTELLIGENCE AND NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE) MIGHT ALSO HAVE SOME LINKS TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRASIL 08414 02 OF 02 301749Z

"DEATH SQUAD." BOMBING OF MARINHO RESIDENCE MORE DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN GIVEN HIS CONSERVATIVE, ANTI-COMMUNIST CREDENTIALS. HOWEVER, AS DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, ONE JOURNALIST OF GLOBO NEWSPAPER WAS ARRESTED THIS SPRING ON CHARGES OF MEMBERSHIP IN COMMUNIST PARTY WHILE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES APPARENTLY BELIEVE OTHER "COMMUNISTS" CONTINUE TO WORK FOR GLOBO. THIS PAST TOGETHER WITH TV GLOBO INTERVIEW WITH BISHOP ON DAY OF HIS KIDNAPPING MIGHT HAVE PROVIDED SUFFICIENT MOTIVATION TO RIGHT WING EX-TREMISTS.

8. CONTINUATION OF PURPORTEDLY AAB TERRORIST ACTS INTO FOURTH AND FIFTH INCIDENTS SPREAD OVER TWO-MONTH PERIOD PROBABLY SOURCE SOURCE OF CONSIDERABLE IRRITATION IN BRASILIA AND IN ARMY CIRCLES CLOSE TO GEISEL. STRONG REACTIONS OF JUSTICE MINISTER AND 1ST ARMY COMMANDER LIKELY REFLECT BOTH THIS IRRITATION AND PIQUE. HOWEVER, GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO LIMIT MEDIA COVERAGE TO PRESS PRESUMABLY REFLECTS AWARENESS THAT SUCH INCIDENTS CAN BE EXPLOITED TO LAW AND ORDER REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT'S DETRIMENT IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN NOW WELL UNDERWAY FOR NOVEMBER 15 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. NONETHELESS, FRESH INCIDENTS HAVE REMINDED PUBLIC AND MDB POLITICIANS THAT THUS FAR POLICE INVESTIGATIONS HAVE REVEALED NO LEADS INTO PREVIOUS BOMBINGS IN RIO, SAO PAULO AND PORTO ALEGRE AND PRESSURE IS ON GOVERNMENT TO PRODUCE RESULTS THIS TIME. SINCE RESULTS MIGHT WELL PROVE MORE EMBARRASSING TO REGIME THAN ANY LACK THEREOF, IN OUR VIEW, IT REMAINS OPEN TO QUESTION WHETHER ANY PERSON WILL BE CHARGED WITH THESE INCIDENTS. AT THE VERY MOST WE WOULD EXPECT, HOWEVER, THAT KNOWN EXTREMISTS OF AAB WITHIN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE STRONGLY ADMONISHED.

JOHNSON

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